

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: Contracts for Outside Plan Checking and Inspection Consultant Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. Authorize the City Manager to execute contracts for outside plan checking and inspection services with Ahearn & Knox, Berryman & Heniger, Hughes Associates, Inc., Harris & Associates, Inc. and Linhart Petersen Powers Associates through July 31, 2004.
2. Authorize the City Manager to increase the amounts of those contracts in Fiscal Year 2003-04 by an amount not to exceed \$25,000 per contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funds required for these contracts have been provided in the Community Development Department/Building Inspection Division's approved budget for Fiscal Year 2003-04. The cost of the consultants' plan checking and inspection services is fully recovered from the plan checking and permit fees paid by the applicants. The contract amounts are as follows: Ahearn & Knox, Inc.—\$20,000; Berryman & Heniger, Inc.—\$30,000; Hughes Associates, Inc.—\$25,000; Harris & Associates, Inc.—\$40,000; and Linhart Petersen Powers Associates, Inc.—\$230,000. The \$25,000 increase per contract would also be recoverable from plan checking and inspection fees paid by the applicants prior to the payment of the consultants.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

This item is continued from the August 19, 2003 City Council meeting in order to provide additional background on consultant performance monitoring and the contract payment structure as it relates to the applicant's cost. Building Inspection Plan Check Process (Attachment 3) outlines the process that the Building Inspection Division uses to track and monitor consultant plan check performance to ensure that the City's development review standards are consistently met. This attachment also outlines the applicant plan check fee calculation and collection process, including the payment schedules for the outside consultants.

The Building Inspection Division of the Community Development Department has used Ahearn & Knox, Inc., Berryman & Heniger, Inc., Harris & Associates, Inc., Linhart Petersen Powers Associates, Inc. and Hughes Associates as consultants to provide outside structural,

Fire Code and Building Code plan checking of residential and nonresidential buildings for the past 13 years. They have consistently provided the City and our customers with a high level of support and dependability. This arrangement has allowed the Building Inspection Division to meet their plan checking and inspection workload that was a cumulative \$1.65 billion between 1996-2003. Successfully supporting this level of work during the period was critical because of the increased demand for quicker turnaround times on plan reviews and adequate inspection support to meet the aggressive construction schedules that are now standard with contractors to reduce the time from the start of the project to occupancy. In an effort to maintain a high level of customer service from the consultants, staff reviews the performance of the consultants to ensure a consistent level of plan check and technical review that meets the City's multifaceted development review goals prior to the contract renewal each fiscal year. The most comprehensive performance evaluation for all the plan check and inspection service consultants was performed prior to the Fiscal Year 2002-03 contract renewals (Attachment 2). The overall customer service rating for the consultants affected by these contracts was 8.1 on a scale of 10, with 10 being excellent.

The reduction of four full-time and two consultant inspector positions to the Building Inspection budget over the past two fiscal years has created a situation which requires that the division use outside consultants to maintain the high level of development review, plan checking and inspection services. The use of outside plan check consultants provides the equivalent workload support of five full-time in-house plan checkers. If the City chose to support the plan check operation for reviewing the six-year average of 1,645 plan checks per year with permanent staff, it would require an estimated increase to the Building Inspection annual budget of \$549,000. The additional support from Linhart Petersen Powers Associates, Inc.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and Berryman & Heniger, Inc. in supplying field inspection personnel has been critical to managing the increased field inspection workload of the past eight years and will continue to be an important component in the Building Inspection Division's budget reduction strategy again this year. The use of these consultants is also important for maintaining the division's current level of economic development customer service and expanding code enforcement responsibilities.

These five firms not only provide the Building Inspection Division with additional Building Code and Fire Code plan checking and Title 24 energy and handicapped accessibility plan checking services, but, since the Building Inspection Division does not have a registered structural engineer on staff, they also provide structural plan checking and consulting services for the more complex structures and help implement the more restrictive engineering requirements. Finally, these firms permit the Building Inspection Division to be responsive to the new Federal and State laws that require enforcement at the local level, which this year will include enforcement of the 2000 Uniform Model Codes that went into effect in 2002.

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The term of these contracts is through July 31, 2004 with a 30-day notice prior to termination. The contracts are the updated standard contract version with the current insurance requirements and have been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office. The plan checking fees for structural and engineering plan checking for Ahearn & Knox, Inc. are based on an hourly rate that will not exceed 75 percent of the plan checking fee provided for in Table 1-A of the 1997 Uniform Building Code. The plan checking fees paid to Hughes Associates, Inc. shall be based on an hourly rate to be approved by the Deputy Community Development Director for Building and Safety and shall not exceed the fees collected from the applicant. The plan checking fees for Harris & Associates, Inc., Berryman & Heniger, Inc., and Linhart Petersen Powers Associates shall be 75 percent of the plan checking fee collected by the City. Therefore, the consultants will not be paid unless the City has collected offsetting plan checking and permit revenues.

Drafts of the proposed contracts are included as Attachment 1.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

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Attachments: 1. Drafts of the Proposed Contracts
2. Plan Check and Inspection Evaluation
3. Building Inspection Plan Check Process